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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004580

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA AND NP

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [KNNP](#) [LY](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY: LIBYAN ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION A MORE
IMMEDIATE CONCERN THAN WMD

REF: A. SECSTATE 282619

[1](#)B. ROME 3207

[1](#)C. ROME 2917

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MC TOM COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. THE MFA'S MIDDLE EAST OFFICE APPEARS MORE CONCERNED WITH ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION STEMMING FROM LIBYA THAN WMD. POST ALSO PLANS TO RAISE OUR CONCERNS WITH MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL COOPERATION GIANDOMENICO MAGLIANO, WHO OVERSEAS THE OFFICE DEALING WITH EXPORT CONTROLS, WHICH HAS NORMALLY BEEN MORE ATTENTIVE TO WMD ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) POLOFF DELIVERED REFTEL TO ANTONIO BELLAVIA, HEAD OF THE MFA'S OFFICE FOR NORTHERN AFRICA. ACCORDING TO BELLAVIA, ITALY SHARES U.S. CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE LIBYAN TERRORISM AND WMD, BUT HAS NOT SEEN ANY EVIDENCE OF PRODUCTION OF BIOLOGICAL OR CHEMICAL WMD. ON THE OTHER HAND, ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION POSES A REAL AND IMMEDIATE THREAT TO ITALIAN SECURITY. FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF THIS PAST SUMMER, WHEN SCORES OF WOULD-BE IMMIGRANTS DROWNED WHILE TRYING TO REACH THE ITALIAN COAST ILLEGALLY FROM LIBYA, ITALY IS INTENT ON INCREASING ITS COLLABORATION WITH LIBYA IN COMBATING CLANDESTINE IMMIGRATION.

[1](#)3. (C) BELLAVIA SAID ONE EU TECHNICAL TEAM HAS ALREADY TRAVELED TO LIBYA TO DISCUSS LIBYA'S MATERIAL REQUESTS TO HELP COMBAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, AND A SECOND ONE IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE SOON. AS OF YET THE LIBYANS HAVE NOT PROVIDED A LIST OF MATERIALS. ONCE IT DOES, THAT LIST WILL BE NEGOTIATED DEPENDING ON WHAT THE EU CAN OFFER AND WHETHER THE EU DEEMS THE REQUESTS TO BE VALID IN TERMS OF FIGHTING CLANDESTINE IMMIGRATION. IN RESPONSE TO POLOFF'S CONCERN THAT SOME ITEMS THAT ARE LIKELY TO BE REQUESTED, SUCH AS NIGHT GOGGLES, COULD SERVE OTHER PURPOSES, BELLAVIA ACKNOWLEDGED THE POINT. HOWEVER, HE ARGUED THAT THIS WOULD BE TRUE FOR MANY OF THE ITEMS ON THE LIST, SUCH AS ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES, BUT THAT WITHOUT THESE ITEMS LIBYA DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO SECURE ITS BORDERS.

[1](#)4. (C) BELLAVIA DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE LIFTING OF UN SANCTIONS WILL RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN EXPORTS TO LIBYA OF ITEMS THAT COULD BE USED TO CONDUCT TERRORISM, SINCE SUCH ITEMS WOULD STILL BE COVERED UNDER CURRENT EXPORT REGULATIONS. LIKEWISE, AN END TO THE EU EMBARGO AGAINST LIBYA WOULD RESULT IN A RETURN TO OPERATIONAL NORMALITY. THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCH A POLICY, ON THE OTHER HAND, COULD HAVE VERY BENEFICIAL EFFECTS IN TERMS OF EASING TENSIONS BETWEEN LIBYA AND THE EU. IF THE EU DOES NOT LIFT THE EMBARGO, ITALY WILL PRESS FOR AN EXEMPTION FROM THE EU WEAPONS BAN FOR THE MATERIALS LIBYA IS SEEKING TO FIGHT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.

[1](#)5. (SBU) COMMENT. THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING IS ONE OF THE TOP PRIORITIES OF THE ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY. THE FLOOD OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS THIS SUMMER CAUSED BITTER STRIFE WITHIN PM BERLUSCONI'S GOVERNING COALITION WHEN RIGHT-WING ELEMENTS CRITICIZED THE INTERIOR MINISTER'S INADEQUATE ACTIONS. IN RESPONSE, ITALY SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH LIBYA ON 3 JULY INVOLVING INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND INCREASED ASSISTANCE FROM ITALIAN NAVAL VESSELS AND POLICE UNITS, TO COOPERATE IN THESE EFFORTS (REF B). ITALY ALSO IS PRESSING LIBYA TO JOIN NATO'S MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE. FURTHERMORE, ITALY WOULD LIKE TO SEE A LIFTING OF THE EU EMBARGO AGAINST LIBYA, THOUGH BELLAVIA'S SUPERIOR, VICE DIRECTOR GENERAL CERULLI, SEPARATELY TOLD POL MC THAT HE DOES NOT EXPECT THIS TO HAPPEN SOON. IMMEDIATE CONCERNS ABOUT BORDER PROTECTION ARE LIKELY TO TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER LESS EVIDENT THREATS OF LIBYA WMD. END COMMENT.

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